



People queue up to offer prayers at the Shankaracharya Temple in Srinagar, J&K, on Sunday on the occasion of Maha Shivratri and Herath festivals | PTI

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- VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM
- TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM
- THIRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Bolt from the Blues: Meek Pak surrender without fight

No handshake, no rivalry either as Ishan's heroics and precision bowling do the job

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN
@Colombo

THE rain stayed away. But so did the 'spirit of the game' as India and Pakistan continued their recent policy of not engaging at the toss. Suryakumar Yadav didn't greet Pakistan's Salman Agha. The game itself was reduced to a non-event as a dominating Indian display meant they won the game by 61 runs to advance to the Super Eight stage of the World Cup where stiffer tests will arrive.

After weeks of theatrics and threats of boycott, more drama arrived even before a ball was bowled in front of a capacity crowd as the two captains refused to engage with each other. Both of them stood within handshaking distance but the hands never shook. This game of political chess was made all the more inexplicable as Wasim Akram, here on media duties, and Rohit Sharma, the World Cup ambassador, greeted each other like long lost friends. They hugged and shook hands in front of the world cricket media 10 minutes before the beginning of the first innings.

By the time game started, the city came to a standstill with heightened security and loud fans from the subcontinent.

All pre-match discussions were immediately put to the background as Ishan Kishan continued his coruscating bat-



India opener Ishan Kishan leads the charge with 40-ball 77 against Pakistan in Colombo on Sunday. India's 175 was too much as Pakistan folded for just 114 | AP



Today's Matches

11am: UAE vs Afghanistan (Delhi)

3pm: England vs Italy (Kolkata)

7pm: Sri Lanka vs Australia (Pallekele)

8-1 India continue to dominate Pakistan in T20 World Cups, extend record to 8 wins of 9

175 India's 175/5 is the highest total in T20 WC matches between these two teams

ting form to reduce Pakistan's mix and match spinners. His batting has been thoroughly incandescent since the World Cup began: 20 off 16 against US, 61 off 24 against Namibia and, now, 77 of the most murderous runs you will see at a global event. He did edge a few but the only way you win the lottery is when you buy yourself a ticket. He bought a few and helped the team win the jackpot.

Pakistan helped them by opting to bowl but it seemed likely the stage got to them. They were

never on the money and the Men In Blue didn't need a second invitation to punish them on a night when they played like champions elect. For all the psychodrama and hype associated with this fixture, it has not been worthy of the build-up in terms of results. Long after the lights were switched off at the Premadasa, one thought dominated. This makes it six games on the trot for India against them in T20Is. Game. Set. Match. The Championship will follow at this rate. **P13**

Step up, share gains with workers, PM to India Inc

India as next AI hub

Modi pitched India as a global hub for digital infrastructure and AI saying the country is ready to host the world's data and lead the next wave of the technology revolution

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged the private sector to step in "more aggressively" and "boldly", while hailing the latest Budget and a spate of global trade deals signed by his government as foundations for Viksit Bharat.

In a wide-ranging interview with PTI, the prime minister urged the dynamic private corporate sector to invest "more aggressively" in research and development, adopt frontier technologies, deepen supply-chain capabilities and compete on quality and productivity rather than on protected margins.

"Policy can only create the enabling framework," he said. "The next phase of transformation requires a decisive response from private sector. In-

centives and tariff preferences catalyse growth, but competitiveness rests on innovation, efficiency and scale."

The PM said gains of private sector must be shared fairly between workers, shareholders and owner-managers as productivity rises. "Sustainable growth requires social legitimacy. Rising real wages, skill upgrade, and stable employment reinforce domestic demand and social cohesion," he said.

On India concluding trade deals with the European Union and the UK, securing tariff reductions and expanded market access for goods and services, while reaching an understanding with the US to ease tariff frictions, Modi said "There is a new confidence in our nation...we are a bright spot of growth even in difficult global circumstances."



The front portion of the Indica car was completely damaged in the accident

Five youth die after car crashes into KSRTC bus

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

JUST a few hours after a deadly accident near Hoskote claimed the lives of seven, including six minors, five youth died after their car rammed into a divider and collided with an oncoming KSRTC bus on Saturday night. The accident occurred on the Tumakuru-Bengaluru National Highway flyover in front of Jindal Hospital in the Madanayakanahalli police limits. Like in the previous accident on Friday early morning, here too the youth had allegedly lied to their parents about going out on a drive, the police said.

The deceased have been identified as Durga Prasad (20), who helped in his father's business, Lalith Kumar (23), a CCTV technician, Harshith (20), a second PU student, Keshav (19) and Dhanush (17). All were friends and residents of Doddaballapur in Bengaluru Rural district.

Keshav was driving the Indica car (KA 02 MA 8841) owned by Lalith Kumar. **P5**



We now have FTAs with 38 nations, an unprecedented milestone in India's trade history, including countries of varying economic strength

Narendra Modi

Om Birla to represent India at Bangla PM's oath ceremony

New Delhi: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will represent India at the swearing-in ceremony of Bangladesh's next PM, Tarique Rahman, on February 17. Bangladesh had invited PM Narendra Modi, but the latter will not be able to attend it as he is scheduled to hold talks with French President Emmanuel Macron | **P11**

SC to hear pleas challenging women entry to Sabarimala

New Delhi: The Supreme Court will hear on Monday a batch of review and writ petitions challenging its 2018 verdict permitting the entry of women of all ages into the Lord Ayyappa temple. A three-judge bench, headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, is scheduled to hear the review and writ petitions | **P7**

B'luru student missing in US found dead

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

SAKETH Sreenivasiah, a 22-year-old student from Bengaluru studying in the United States, missing since February 10, was found dead on Saturday.

The Consulate General of India in San Francisco confirmed the recovery of his body. While the exact cause of his death is yet to be ascertained, it is said that his body was



The roommate shared on social me-

recovered near Lake Anza in Berkeley. The photos and videos of authorities searching for him in the lake and around Berkeley Hills were circulating on social media. As per Berkeley media reports from Berkeley, Saketh's roommate, who had filed a missing complaint, identified the body. Earlier, Saketh's wallet and bag were found at a nearby park.

dia that Saketh's mood had shifted two weeks ago, and he had started eating less and engaging less, and had simply "stopped caring" about life.

In a statement on X, the consulate said, "The Consulate deeply regrets to inform that local police have confirmed the recovery of the body of the missing Indian student, Saketh Sreenivasiah. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones during this profoundly difficult time." **CONTINUED ON: P5**



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